

# TRAILER LIFE

FOLLOW THE ROAD TO ADVENTURE

## TOYS ON BOARD

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**GARAGES TO GO FOR TAKING BIG GEAR WITH YOU**

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**TESTED**

# Off-Grid Getaway

**VENTURE RV'S GAME-CHANGING SONIC X TAKES CHARGE WITH ENERGY, INTERNET AND WATER-FILTERING TECHNOLOGY**

**ESCAPE ROUTE**  
LOSE THE CROWDS ON A TREK TO 5 SMALL TOWNS IN WYOMING

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🔗 The rugged, all-terrain exterior appearance of the Sonic X is matched by an equipment list designed for off-grid camping.

# X-Treme Game- Changer

Venture RV's nimble, forward-looking Sonic X is built for off-grid adventures

— by Chris Dougherty

There are a number of reasons why the 2020 Venture RV Sonic X earned this year's *RVBusiness* RV of the Year award, and outdoor enthusiasts will likely appreciate every one of them. The new Sonic X evolved from the 2019 prototype that Venture RV's parent company, KZ RV, displayed at last year's RVX show. The concept trailer was skinned in carbon fiber and had a true off-road look that had "adventure" written all over it. Included were brush guards, solar power and a generator-replacing lithium energy system.

These were items not seen in this segment before, and the concept was well received, according to the company, which led to further refinement for the 2020 model year. While the Sonic X may not be cheap for its size, the fact that it incorporates the latest energy, internet and water-filtering technology in a trail-ready, four-season off-grid package makes it one of a kind, at least for now.

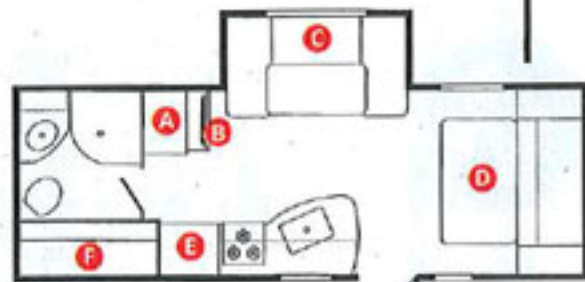




the interior is attractive and understated. There's adequate interior LED lighting, and USB charge ports are in convenient locations. Continuing the functional elements, the galley features a free-form 1,980-square-inch solid-surface countertop, with a stainless double-bowl sink with a roll-up cover and a Furrion range with a glass top, which can be easily used as additional prep space.

Storage is ample in this trailer. The galley has a number of cabinets and a drawer pack below the counter, along with two large overhead cabinets that share the space with the microwave. The main convenience center, with inverter, solar and lighting controls, is built into the end of the overhead cabinet structure. A Norcold 7-cubic-foot refrigerator-freezer and the deep pantry across the aisle can be packed with plenty of vittles for the crew.

In the front, two shirt wardrobes flank the Murphy bed, with bedside storage behind each one, as well as in an overhead cabinet. Inside the rear-bath full closet is a gun/fishing-rod locker, as well as a smaller safe for



- A) pantry
- B) entertainment center
- C) 88x48" dinette
- D) Murphy bed/sofa
- E) refrigerator
- F) Outside Garage System

handguns and valuables.

Spanning the width of the trailer, the bathroom is exceptionally roomy for a trailer of this size, and well appointed. A 34-inch glass-front radius shower has ample space, and the floor area is more than sufficient for toweling off, even for a 6-footer. A two-tiered vanity hosts a stainless sink, solid-surface counter, enclosed storage area below and a shelf with another counter surface just above. A deep medicine cabinet handles plenty of necessities. A foot-flush porcelain toilet rounds off the space nicely. All the bathroom lighting is indirect.

Keep in mind, this is an outdoor-

*While this trailer may not be of interest to some rugged outdoor-adventure types, it does present a new option for those who want to explore the road, or trail, less traveled, without roughing it.*

### THE INSIDE SCOOP

The Sonic X 220VRBX has a roomy feel inside, primarily due to the Murphy bed in the front wall. In this 26-foot trailer, the living space is wide open, and the queen bed that folds down at bedtime augments the ability to visually open the interior during the day without exceptional overall length. Plus, the U-shaped dinette makes into a remarkably comfortable 48-by-88-inch bed, so a couple of kids or another 6-foot-tall adult can get a comfortable night's sleep.

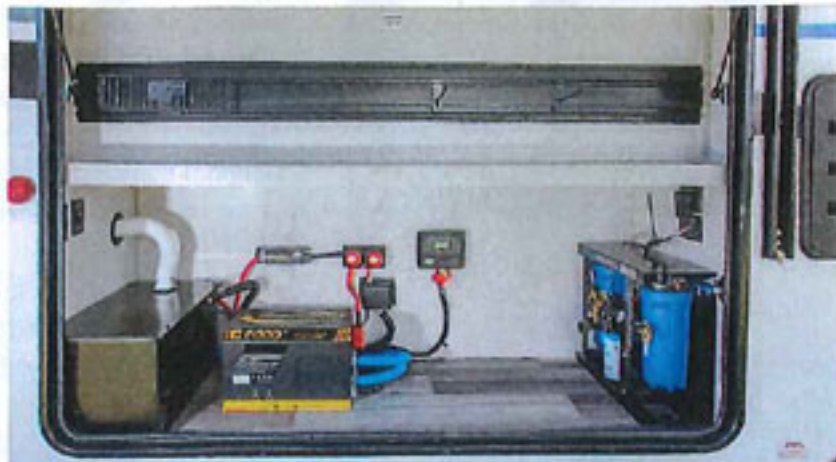
The interior decor is modern-looking, with "pallet-washed-wood" grays, whites and some black accents here and there. The vinyl flooring also has a pallet-wood pattern and, overall,



The Sonic X's dinette makes into a comfortable 48-by-88-inch bed. The table telescopes down into a track to support the bed. There's plenty of table-to-seat-back space.



GOING OFF THE GRID WHILE STAYING ON THE GO



#### SECLUDED IN COMFORT

The galley, above, is fully equipped and remarkably spacious. Top right: The LiFePO4 power system and No Dirty Water/Clearsource water-filtration system ensure extended isolation. A locker for fishing rods and hunting rifles (middle right) resides in a closet in the well-appointed rear bath (right).

adventure trailer, with less emphasis on luxury. The inside of the Sonic X is designed to be robust and easy to clean after bringing a day's worth of nature back to the homestead.

The Sonic X is prepped for King's 4G-LTE and Wi-Fi access point. This will allow the best chance of receiving internet and communication access in out-of-the-way places.

#### THE OUTSIDE STORY

Most of the changes over the standard Sonic are made outside, and frankly, this is where the additional upcharge is incurred. Looking over the trailer, one gets the feeling that it's been conceived by a dedicated off-road club member.

The Sonic X is built on the BAL NXG chassis, which is an excellent choice for this trailer, because, among other things, the parts are coated using a rust-resistant process and Huck-bolted together, which should give the frame some resistance to corrosion in comparison to legacy frames. This chassis

sits atop twin-lifted Dexter 3,500-pound-rated Torflex axles with self-adjusting brakes and is fitted with 15-inch high-grip special trailer (ST) tires with an off-road tread pattern.

The front underbelly is clad with steel instead of Coroplast to protect against road debris and rock hits; however, the standard underbelly material is used from just forward of the axles to the rear. This makes sense because there's much less chance of road damage toward the rear, and the extra weight up front should pay off in the end. The enclosed area under the trailer is heated by the forced-air furnace and is insulated to extend the traveling season. Tank heaters further extend this capability.

Surrounding the chassis is a custom-designed nerf-bar



**+ WHAT WE LIKED**  
Build quality, off-road capability, lithium power system, interior layout with Murphy bed

**- WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE**  
Instructions for kayak rack, higher gross vehicle weight rating for more cargo capacity and to carry a roof rack



system, painted electric blue to make it immediately recognizable. These steel guards may help protect the trailer to a point, provided the trailer is level when it brushes up against obstacles. Otherwise, the awning and body may still take a hit, depending on circumstances. In other words, just because the trailer has protective "gear," the owner still has to be careful when negotiating tight spots.

Let's be clear: Not that anyone in their right mind would attempt it, but this trailer is not a rock climber, nor will it do well fording a creek. It's still a travel trailer that's 29 feet long (with the cargo rack) and weighs up to 7,000 pounds, and the body will not survive torture.

Speaking of which, integrated into the chassis at the rear is a fold-down cargo/kayak rack that has more pieces than an erector set, with no instructions on its rather complicated assembly. We didn't have a kayak with us, which was fine, because even a certified RV technician could not assemble this thing. There were likely missing pieces, but the system promises to be a great option for carrying a second kayak, apart from the one that might be carried on the truck. The tray itself is sturdy and well made, and the pin holes lined up, which is a pleasant surprise, compared to some we've seen.

Another unique feature of the Sonic X is the off-road fore and aft light bars. These high-efficiency LED light bars are amazingly bright, as some of our campground neighbors found out. After returning to the trailer one night, it was immediately apparent that the switches for the light bars had been left on inadvertently, and the illumination turned a section of the campground from night to day. About six sites were directly affected, and the occupants were all gracious and interested. All their shades were drawn, however.

The Sonic X features electric stabilizers front and rear, along with an electric A-frame jack. The LevelMate Pro level-indication system has

app-driven electronic sensing that shows when the trailer is level. It's a good product, but understand that the trailer does not have a leveling system in the traditional sense. You will still have to use trailer ramps, blocks or wood to level the unit, but the app will tell you when leveling is achieved.

## THE HEART AND SOUL

The 220VRBX has a large outside compartment where its more pedestrian kin would have placed an outdoor kitchen. Called the Outside Garage System, it contains the heart of what makes this trailer one-of-a-kind. The "garage" element of this storage system includes wall storage organizers and ample space for storing other accoutrements around the high-tech components. Switches for the tank heaters, pump and exterior lighting are also in this area.

The aforementioned lithium power-generation system is designed by GoPower and features a 250-amp lithium-ion battery pack that is enclosed in a steel case, a 2,000-watt GoPower IC pure-sine inverter and a 100-amp DC charger. When plugged into shorepower, this charger will make quick work of properly conditioning the lithium-battery pack.

When off the grid, however, a solar-charging system (four 100-watt panels) feeds through a GoPower 30-amp solar-charge controller to restore battery condition. This system dramatically increases off-grid usability.

Having power is excellent, but having clean drinking water is a must, and the Sonic X features a first-of-its-kind Boondocker water-purification/filtering system, which was a joint venture by Clearsource and No Dirty Water (NDW). The Sonic Xtreme Water Filtration System, as Venture calls it, has dual micron filters, a pump and an NDW water system with an activated-oxygen/ozone generator.

This water-purification system technology was designed to provide

## SPECIFICATIONS

### 2020 VENTURE RV SONIC X 220VRBX

Exterior Length	26' 11"
Exterior Width	7' 6"
Exterior Height	10' 4"
Interior Width	7' 4"
Interior Height	6' 10"
Construction	Laminated fiberglass sidewalls with aluminum framing
Freshwater Cap.	78 gal.
Black-Water Cap.	30 gal.
Gray-Water Cap.	30 gal.
LP-Gas Cap.	10 gal.
Water-Heater Cap.	6 gal.
Refrigerator	7 cu. ft.
Furnace	20,000 Btu
Air Conditioner	13,500 Btu
Converter	100 amp (inverter charger)
Inverter	2,000 watts
Battery	LiFePO4
Tires	ST235/75R15 LRC
Suspension	Torsion
Weight (freshwater, water heater, LP-gas full; no cargo)	6,330 lbs.
GVWR	7,000 lbs.
GAWR (2)	3,500 lbs.
Cargo Carrying Cap.	670 lbs.
MSRP, Base	\$47,843
MSRP, As Tested	\$48,775
Basic Warranty	1 year

### Venture RV

www.venture-rv.com

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A front-wall-mounted Murphy bed provides a comfortable queen bed at night. When the bed is folded up, it reveals the standard sofa, which opens up the living space substantially.





drinking water in disadvantaged areas of the world, transforming muddy water into clean and drinkable water. A percentage of each purchase price is applied to fund those systems, according to NDW founder and president John Szykiel. (See our test of the NDW Adventure Pak in the June 2020 Hands On).

The Clearsource dual-filter system is no slouch either. Also tested in *Trailer*

*Life* (March 2019), the Clearsource filter system is mounted in a steel chassis that protects the filter canisters and fittings from damage. High-quality cartridges are available for most filtering needs.

Enhancing the filter system is its capability to pump water drafted from a static water source through the filter system and into the freshwater tank. Any solids are filtered out down to the micron level (or sub-micron, depending on the



Nestled into the end of the kitchen cabinet, the control center does double duty as a hidden charging station.

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Fresh Water Tanks, Skylights, Step Trims,  
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filter media used), and then the water is sanitized for a 99.8 percent reduction in microorganisms, according to NDW's certification tests. A standard RV pump supplies clean tank water throughout the trailer. As of this writing, the Sonic X is the only trailer with this type of water-purification/filtering system.

### THE FINAL WORD

The Sonic X 220VRBX is a game-changer in the adventure-camping space. While this trailer may not be of interest to some of the rugged outdoor-adventure types who prefer a more tentlike or tiny-trailer experience, it does present a new option for those who want to explore the road, or trail, less traveled, without roughing it.

One slight concern we noted is the cargo-carrying capacity. Calculating the weight of a full freshwater tank and water heater, this leaves 670 pounds for food, clothing and gear. Considering the LCI Jack-It two-bike rack on the front, the bike/kayak rack on the back, and lots of storage inside and out for the kind of supplies anticipated for an off-the-grid camping experience, it would be pretty easy to exceed the gross vehicle weight rating.

We were impressed with the build quality of the Sonic X, along with the layout and technology integrated into this unique model. The Sonic X is a trailer that excels at providing home comfort and utility where none exists. Isn't that what we're all after? **TL**